

For friends in need

By LINDA A. FOX

Toronto Sun

Friends Mail Order is a company whose time has come.

With an increasing number of disabled and elderly, the Friends catalogue offers an intriguing array of devices to make their lives easier.

Founder Karen Lilja says Friends Mail Order grew out of a resource for those suffering from Parkinson's disease.

Lilja had been operating a program to provide inexpensive aids to subscribers of a newsletter for people with Parkinson's.

"Funding for the newsletter came to an abrupt halt and it was heartbreaking as our features were greeted with such a wonderful response," she says.

Heartfelt letters

By then, Lilja felt a personal commitment to help. "Here were all these people in need, often writing me such heartfelt letters of thanks," she said. "So, I decided to continue the operation of the original publication by expanding it into a catalogue."

Many devices have only previously been available through hospital supply catalogues or occupational therapists.

Lilja's catalogue endeavors to bring those in need and the goods closer together.

There are some quite amazing

inventions between the covers of the eight-page color booklet.

You can find fairly ordinary items such as a telescoping walking cane. But there are harder to find things such as a pillbox with an alarm and timer to tell you when to take your pill; cutlery with especially large grips and thick-stemmed drinking goblets for easier grasp.

How about a long-handled broom and dustpan for those who can't bend to pick up debris from the floor? Or, a playing card holder for those with arthritic fingers? There's also large numbered playing cards.

And there really are some really hard-to-find inventions as you peruse such things as special door-knob turners, easy on/off lampswitches, and the Boston Hoop, a device designed to wash your back and other body parts you can't reach.

"We feel the catalogue makes getting these items easier to obtain," says Lilja. "It also allows people to shop from the privacy of their own homes."

Lilja says sometimes the smallest everyday activity can be physically demanding to someone who is elderly or physically challenged.

"We are committed in two ways," she says. "First, we try to offer Canadian made products wherever possible. And second,



— Kevin Cazabon

HELPING HAND ... Karen Lilja with some of the labor saving products you'll find in her catalogue for the disabled and elderly.

5% from every purchase is donated to the medical research charity of the customer's choice."

Friends Mail Order has a line on the order form to designate

the charity of your choice at the time the order is placed.

Friends Mail Order catalogue is available for \$1 to cover postage from 45 Osborne Ave., Toronto, M4E 3A8.

Red Dog not for all tastes

By CHRIS KNIGHT
Canadian Press

It began mysteriously in April. The scowling, crimson face of a bulldog appeared on billboards and street corners in several Ontario cities.

It glared from newspaper ads, and even the boards at Maple Leaf Gardens and the Pacific Coliseum in Vancouver.

There was no explanation for the logo — until May 16.

Red Dog is a new beer, backed by a seemingly endless advertising budget.

Is it any good?

Poorly rated

Stephen Beaumont, author of the *Great Canadian Beer Guide*, rates Red Dog a star and a half on his four-star scale, placing it above most other Molson and Labatt brews (which generally rate a one) but below micro-breweries such as Connors of St. Catharines, Ont.

Ian Bowering has penned several books about beer. He's more blunt.

"My rating system is would I drink another one or not?" he said. And his answer is — not. He said he looks for body, rich color, taste and aftertaste in a beer, and

Film biz a reel challenge